Reflections on the Psychosocial Care of the Patient and Family
Mary Sharon Curran, RN, MS

Department of Nursing
Towson University
Presentation Objectives:

- Discuss the critical role of the nurse advocating for the emotional and spiritual well-being of patients and their families

- Discuss the concept and signs and symptoms of “Compassion Fatigue” related to being a nursing caregiver of complex patients
Nursing Education

- Minimal focus on the psycho-social needs and care of the patient and family in traditional nursing and hospital education programs

- Minimal focus on the impact of complex caregiving on the nurses themselves
Seminar in Nursing Course

• Provide opportunities for students to witness through feature films and documentaries the real life experience of patients in clinical setting and living with their illness in the community.

• See & Hear

• Think

• Feel

• Respond

• Reflect
Seminar in Nursing Course

- Provide nursing students the opportunity to share their experiences as clinical nursing students/professional caregivers, reflecting on the impact of this experience on their whole self.
- Is nursing what they expected?
- How is it different? Both positive and negative.
- What if any impact do they believe they can make on the psycho-social-spiritual life of the patient and family?
- How will they practice self-care to prevent “compassion fatigue”?
Student Nurse
Time & Energy

- Nurses are busy & stressed
- Do we have time and the emotional energy to meet the complex needs of the patient and family?
Student Nurse
Impact on Patient

- Illness can interrupt social, emotional, and spiritual development or movement through life stages
Supporting Emotional Needs

Fear, Sadness, Anxiety, Guilt, Anger, Depression
Family Needs

- Addressing the family’s emotions:
  - Managing uncertainty, guilt and conflict within the family related to treatment and care decisions
Impact on the Family

- Siblings
- Parents
- Grandparents
Emotional Response to the Illness State

- Post-Traumatic Stress in Response to Illness
  - Anxiety, insomnia, anger; fear, irritability; withdrawal
Post-Traumatic Growth

- Finding meaning in response to the illness state
- Enhanced interpersonal relationships
- Discovering strengths
Spiritual Needs
Faith and Hope
Advocating for Emotional and Spiritual Needs

A critical role of nurses as members of the inter-professional treatment team is to advocate for the whole patient and family.
RN Calls Team Meeting
Use of Films, Art, Music, and Literature in Nursing Education

- Enhances understanding of the patient and family’s lived experiences
- Provides opportunities for nurses to share their thoughts and feelings on this aspect of nursing care
- Engages nurse’s self-reflection and self-awareness
Use of Films, Art, Music, and Literature in Nursing Education

- The literature helps facilitate a discussion of the nursing role related to this difficult aspect of nursing care.
Balancing All Aspects of Nursing Care with Self Care
Self-Reflection

Self-reflection to increase self-awareness

◆ How might you as a nurse might contribute in a meaningful way to the emotional and spiritual processing of patient’s illness experience?

◆ How has your work as a professional nurse impacted your overall well-being?
Therapeutic Use of Self

- Myself
- Patient
- Compassion
- Knowledge
- Open-mind
- Empathy
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Humor
- Resilience
Critical Concepts Addressed in Films

- Lion in the House - healthcare disparities, role adaptation; end-of-life
- Silver Linings Playbook - Mental Illness; Stigma
- 50/50 - Unique issues when YA is the patient; Interpersonal Relationships
- Still Alice & The Savages - dementia, end of life; family dynamics-conflict
- August Osage County - grief & loss, depression, addiction, healing
- Philadelphia - stigma; impact on career
Compassion Fatigue

- The multi-dimensional role of a nurse caregiver may lend itself to the nurse developing compassion fatigue.

- Compassion fatigue is secondary traumatic stress.

- The cost of caring of those in emotional pain.

- Compassion Fatigue is not a result of a singular event, but rather a compilation of multiple episodes of secondary traumatic stress without opportunities for self-care.

(Sabo, 2006)
Self-Care in the Nursing Profession

Nurses need to know when to pull back in order to be able to give of self
Compassion Fatigue
Signs & Symptoms

- Forgetfulness
- Headaches
- Stomachaches
- Hypertension
- Weight gain
- Anger
- Fatigue
- Sleep disturbance
- More accident-prone
- Decreased mental acuity
- Increased rate of medication errors
- Diabetes
- Emotional exhaustion

(Aycock & Boyle, 2009)
Desired Outcome for Nurses
Compassionate Care

- Enhance compassionate care, while reflecting on their own professional growth as a caregiver


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Workshop Activity:
Create a Vision Board

- This activity is to create a VISION of your thinking and feelings related to your career as a nurse caregiver that supports all aspects of the patient’s needs to include their emotional and spiritual needs.

- Reflect on your vision of nurse caregiving when you were first a nurse. How has your vision changed?

- How can you grow in your role of a nurse caregiver?

- Create a Vision Board that illustrates how you want to think and feel as a nurse caregiver in the next year.....

- What is your vision for you as a nurse?
Nurse’s Vision Board

“Do small things with great love.”

“Treat the patient as a whole, not just the hole in the patient.”

Empathetic
Caring
Sad
Faithful
Calm
Happy
Religion
Life
Literate
Hopeful
Advocate
Concerned
Compassionate